

Assembly Bill 241 (Pedro Nava) Responsible Breeder Act of 2009

Reason AB 241 is Necessary

Loopholes in laws and a lack of enforcement at both the state and federal levels de facto allow commercial breeding facilities to ignore basic humane conditions in the treatment of animals. There are no laws that address the negative impact or large scale breeding on either pet overpopulation or local animal control activities.

Existing Law

The **United States Department of Agriculture** licenses and inspects large scale commercial breeding according to regulations outlined in the **Animal Welfare Act (AWA, 7 U.S.C. Sections 2131-2159)**.

California Health and Safety Code Sections 122045 to 122110 require commercial breeders to maintain basic humane standards in regards to sanitation, nutrition, space, socialization, exercise and veterinary care.

This Bill

AB 241 (Nava) limits the number of adult intact dogs or cats a seller can maintain to 50.

Facts

- According to the **Humane Society of the United States**, a puppy mill is a “large scale commercial breeding facility that mass-produces puppies for sale.”
- The **World Animal Foundation** explains that “puppy mill kennels usually consist of small wood and wire-mesh cages, or even empty crates or trailer cabs, all kept outdoors, where female dogs are bred continuously, with no rest between heat cycles. The mothers and their litters often suffer from malnutrition, exposure, and lack of adequate veterinary care.”

- Continuous breeding takes its toll on the females; they are killed at about age six or seven when their bodies give out, and they no longer can produce enough litters.
- The puppies are taken from their mothers at the age of four to eight weeks and sold to brokers who pack them in crates for transport and resale to pet shops. Puppies being shipped from mill to broker to pet shop can cover hundreds of miles by pickup truck, tractor trailer, and/or plane, often without adequate food, water, ventilation, or shelter.
- Between unsanitary conditions at puppy mills and poor treatment in transport, only half of the dogs bred at mills survive to make it to market.
- Of those that are eventually do make it to stores, thousands of puppies each year are often sold to “impulse buyers” and ultimately end up in shelters.
- Nearly 1 million dogs and cats land in California animal shelters every year of whom approximately half are ultimately euthanized.

Facts (continued)

- A criminal bust of a single puppy mill can yield massive expenses to state and local jurisdictions due to the cost of shelter, food and veterinary care.
- A puppy mill bust last year in which 249 animals were rescued in Buxton, Maine cost the state \$440,000. Humane organizations in the region raised approximately \$70,000 in additional funds to assist with the rescue operation.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture is tasked with monitoring and inspecting kennels to ensure that they are not violating the standards of the AWA, but kennel inspections are a low priority:
 - In the U.S., there are more than 1,000 research facilities, more than 2,800 exhibitors, and 4,500 dealers that are supposed to be inspected each year¹.
 - There are three Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service sector offices with a total of approximately 70 veterinary inspectors who are supposed to inspect, unannounced, the various types of facilities covered by the AWA².
 - This means that 70 inspectors have to cover more than 8,300 facilities nationwide annually.
- Two other states – Louisiana and Virginia -- have laws that cap the number of animals a breeder may maintain.
- 29 other states are currently considering legislation to cap the number of animals commercial breeders may maintain.

¹ U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, “Animal Care Report” (Riverdale: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 2004).

² U.S. Department of Agriculture, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, “Compliance Inspections” (Riverdale: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Jun. 2005).

Assemblymember Pedro Nava, through AB 241, hopes to curb pet overpopulation, eliminate mass breeding efforts, and save state and local jurisdictions vital dollars during our ongoing economic crisis.

Support

ASPCA (co-sponsor)

The Humane Society of the United States (co-sponsor)

Social Compassion in Legislation (co-sponsor)

Opposition

N/A

Votes

N/A

For More Information

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